

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Thank you for the opportunity to present comments to the Rural Business Cooperative Service for the Implementation of Section 9006 of the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002.

My name is Mary Shaffner. I represent Evergreen Solar. We are a US manufacturer of photovoltaic - solar energy - cells and modules using our patented String Ribbon multi-crystalline technology. This proven technology allows us to use less silicon and will allow us to achieve greater economies of scale in manufacturing. Our 150 employees proudly manufacture American solar in Marlboro, MA.

We laud your efforts in providing assistance to the rural communities of America. Section 9006 will certainly build upon your tremendous efforts already in place and:

- * Increase farmers and rural businesses economic competitiveness through efficiency and renewable energy applications
- * Make environmentally benign technologies that are cost effective, but that have high upfront capital costs, accessible to the rural community.
- * Increase US energy security, and
- * Provide jobs in America

We at Evergreen ask that you take extra consideration when reviewing the potential for PV.

PV is a proven, cost-effective, non-polluting, and scalable technology, perfectly suited for a myriad of agricultural applications:

- * Remote Power -
- * Waterpumping: livestock watering, irrigation, domestic use
- * Fence Charging -
- * Fish Pond Compressors -
- * Lighting -
- * Remote Buildings/Applications -
- * Ventilation Fans -
- * Back Up Power -
- * Replacement of Diesel -

PV although the most cost-effective technology to provide power is often overlooked in large programs:

- it provides small, scalable power. It can be 1w to power a fence charger to kW's for waterpumping or larger. These are not the single source MW often sought after in programs - However, PV puts power where it is needed, in multiple locations and where it can provide the most benefit.
- High up front Capital Costs associated with systems make purchases out of reach of individuals and small businesses without access to loans.

Combating high upfront capital costs with loans and grants through Section 9006 will allow farmers to attain the benefits of PV:

- * PV is incredibly long lasting. PV modules are guaranteed for 2 decades.
- * PV is scalable - you can add more power/modules when necessary if your load becomes larger over time.
- * PV is portable. Ranchers/farmers can trail the system out to where the cows are to provide pumping.
- * PV requires little to no maintenance and no fuel - saving money in the long run.

* PV is economical - when compared to extending a line and step down transformers, PV often provides the lowest cost solution. For small applications such as fencing and lighting, PV cells mounted on the equipment mean that no wires need to be run - the application can be installed where necessary.

* PV causes no environmental pollution. With electricity from the sun, unlike diesel and other fuels there is no air, noise or water pollution.

* PV is a proven technology. Applications and modules are in the field and have been operational for decades.

Implementing solar reduces our dependence on foreign fuels, increasing energy security, and does not produce the pollution associated with burning fossil fuels.

The National Renewable Energy Labs in Golden has produced a book entitled "Photovoltaics for Farms and Ranches", available online, which provides detailed case studies for Agriculture applications.

We at Evergreen Solar encourage the USDA to set aside a large percentage of section 9006 funds for Photovoltaic applications. Because of its scalable nature, PV will especially help small rural farmers and businesses.

High upfront capital costs associated with PV could be made manageable through 9006 loans and grants, thereby providing access to a proven technology and enabling farmers throughout the country to implement proven, environmentally friendly and cost effective PV applications.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

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